Alberta Crop Report

Crop Conditions as of May 3, 2016

Alberta producers enter the 2016 crop production season with many of the same questions and concerns as last year and maybe more so. Precipitation last fall provided some soil moisture replenishment following the dry conditions of 2015 but amounts were generally insufficient to recharge the subsoil layer. A warm, dry winter resulted in little snow cover to seal the soil and provide some early moisture for the crop to use. The snow was quick to leave in March providing the opportunity for an early start to seeding for those who could take advantage.

Seeding is off to another faster than average start with 21% of the province seeded versus 27% last year. The 5 year average for this date is 9% and the long term average is 15%. See **Table 1** for detail by crop. Approximately 3% of crops have emerged. Soil moisture is a huge concern in all regions. Producers have slowed or delayed seeding of shallow seeded crops such as canola, in hopes of receiving additional precipitation. See **Table 2** for Surface Soil Moisture Ratings.

Hay and pastures have been slow to get started due to the cooler weather in April and the drier soil moisture conditions. Current ratings (2015 ratings in brackets) are: Poor: 25% (5%); Fair: 36% (26%); Good: 34% (62%); Excellent: 5% (7%).

Fall seeded crops have emerged from the winter in good condition with 80% of the winter crops rated in good or excellent condition. Only 4% are rated poor.

Table 1: Alberta Seeding Progress as of May 3, 2016

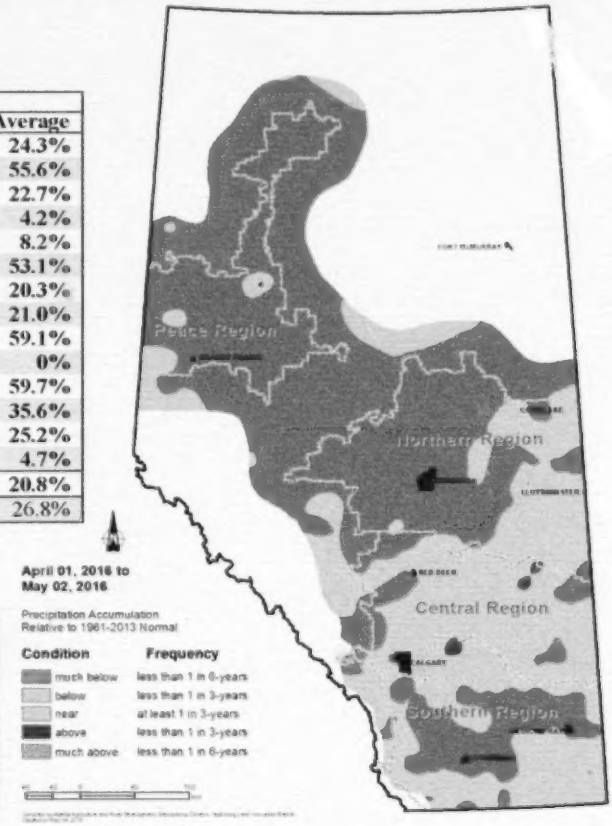
	% Seeded					
	South	Central	N East	N West	Peace	Average
Spr. Wheat	55.8%	25.2%	2.2%	3.7%	20.9%	**24.3%**
Dur. Wheat	60.0%	28.6%	—	—	—	**55.6%**
Barley	56.2%	15.7%	0%	0%	3.3%	**22.7%**
Oats	53.8%	2.0%	0%	0%	2.6%	**4.2%**
Canola	26.7%	12.5%	0.7%	0.6%	3.5%	**8.2%**
Dry Peas	75.8%	42.0%	31.5%	51.2%	26.3%	**53.1%**
Mustard	26.3%	6.8%	—	—	—	**20.3%**
Flax	25.7%	17.5%	—	—	—	**21.0%**
Potatoes	68.0%	0%	0%	10.0%	—	**59.1%**
Dry Beans	0%	—	—	—	—	**0%**
Chickpeas	62.5%	5.0%	—	—	—	**59.7%**
Lentils	38.0%	21.0%	—	—	—	**35.6%**
Corn	40.0%	10.5%	—	—	—	**25.2%**
Mixed Grain	30.0%	2.0%	0%	0%	—	**4.7%**
Average	**50.2%**	**19.0%**	**2.4%**	**2.8%**	**10.9%**	**20.8%**
Last Year	71.5%	20.9%	4.3%	2.5%	3.0%	26.8%

Source: AF/AFSC Crop Reporting Survey

Table 2: Surface Soil Moisture Ratings as of May 3, 2016

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Excessive
South	14.3%	45.4%	39.3%	1.1%	0%
Central	8.8%	30.9%	37.4%	22.3%	0.6%
N East	4.6%	47.7%	28.5%	19.2%	0%
N West	24.6%	70.4%	5.0%	0%	0%
Peace	9.6%	46.9%	37.3%	6.2%	0%
Average	**11.0%**	**45.4%**	**32.4%**	**11.1%**	**0.1%**
Last Year	6.7%	23.8%	56.4%	12.3%	0.8%

Source: AF/AFSC Crop Reporting Survey



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The precipitation map is compiled by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Environmental Stewardship Division, Technology and Innovation Branch.

Growing Forward 2
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REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2016 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)

- Soil moisture conditions are quite dry and get progressively worse as you proceed from east to west. Surface soil moisture is sufficient for germination but precipitation will be needed to maintain growth.
- Soil moisture ratings are below those of last year with surface moisture rated 45% fair (26% last year) and 39% good (53% in 2015). Subsoil moisture rated poor to fair in 50% of region (28% last year).
- 50% of crops are seeded compared to 71% in 2015. 5 year average is 26%, long term average of 33%. 9% have emerged.
- Hay/pastures slow to start growth with 18% rated poor & 44% rated fair (2% poor, 15% fair last year).

Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)

- Best soil moisture conditions in the province with surface moisture rated 60% good or excellent and subsoil moisture rated 72% good or excellent. Soil moisture ratings highest in the east and declines as you proceed west. Opposite of what you would normally expect. Precipitation is badly needed in the west.
- 19% of crops seeded versus 21% last year. 5 year average is 5% and long term average of12%. Less than 1% emerged.
- Hay/pasture ratings higher than last year. 57% of region rated good or excellent compared to 47% in 2015.

Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)

- Soil moisture conditions are good in the east part and get progressively drier as you proceed to the west. 48% of region rated good or excellent for surface moisture (87% in 2015), 43% rated good or excellent for subsoil moisture (86% last year).
- 2% of crops seeded to date compared to 4% in 2015, the 5 year average of 1% and the long term average of 4%. No crop is reported to be emerged at this time.
- Hay/pasture ratings are significantly below 2015. 41% are rated poor in 2016 compared to 3% last year.

Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)

- Soil moisture conditions are significantly below 2015 levels at this time. 95% of surface moisture is currently rated as poor or fair versus 38% last year and 91% of the region is rated poor or fair for subsoil moisture compared to 50% in 2015.
- 3% of crops have been seeded to date, similar to 2015. The 5 year average for the region is 1% and the long term average is 4%. No crop is reported to be emerged at this time.
- Hay/pasture ratings are extremely poor reflecting the poor soil moisture levels. 90% of the region is rated poor or fair compared to 25% last year.

Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)

- A warmer, dry spring has allowed producers the opportunity to start seeding in mid to later April. Surface moistures are reported to be adequate to support germination but insufficient to carry a growing crop without further precipitation. Surface soil moisture is rated 56% poor or fair versus 46% last year. Subsoil moisture is extremely low with 70% of the region rated poor or fair compared to 46% last year.
- 11% of crops have been seeded compared to 3% last year. The 5 year average is 1% while the long term average is 9%. A very small amount of wheat is reported as emerged, less than 1%.
- Producers are very concerned about hay/pasture conditions due to the effects of the very dry conditions experienced last year. 68% of hay/pastures are rated poor or fair this year compared to 41% last year.

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